



**Northgate Community Center and Park
PAT Meeting #2
September 29, 2003
Meeting Notes**

PAT Members Present: Sue Geving, Frank Lufkin, Barbara Maxwell, Joel Tufel, William Lowe, LeAnne Hendrix, John Cash, Marilyn Firlotte, Michelle Rupp, Velva Maye, Jeanne Hayden

PAT Members Not Present: Shawn Olesen,

Audience Present: Jan Brucker

Staff Present: Erin Devoto, Director of Planning & Development Division for Parks; Maureen A. O'Neill, NE Parks and Recreation Manager; Claudia McCain, Seattle Public Library staff; Tim Motzer Parks Project Manager; Joelle Ligon, Public Relations Specialist; Marcia Iwasaki, Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

The Miller-Hull Partnership staff present: Bob Hull, principal designer; Kurt Stolle, project manager for community center; Mark Brands (Site Workshop), landscape architect

7 p.m. Welcome

- Tim welcomed everyone. Each team member introduced themselves.
- Tim indicated that even though we did have the 1% For Art artist scheduled to attend the meeting, she has been tentatively re-scheduled for Oct. 13, 2003.
- The group approved the Meeting Notes from Sept. 15 and Sept. 29, 2003. There was one change. One PAT member wanted to note that he had requested the group look at the potential of parking around the back of the site. This will be added to the Sept. 22 Meeting Notes.
- Tim reiterated that some decisions have already been made regarding the site, and that the PAT's role is to help guide the process within those parameters.
- Tim polled the room to determine if the majority of the PAT felt the parameters of the existing site design were agreeable to them. The discussion was that, given the restrictions of the site and the ability to make a few changes, the PAT is okay with the parking lot location as well as with the location of the buildings.

7:16 p.m. Comments from Visitors

- There was one visitor at the meeting – Jan Brucker. Jan introduced herself.

7:17 p.m. Discussion from previous week's PAT e-mail exchange

- The PAT agreed that the whole site should be pedestrian friendly, and that the design should facilitate people coming onto the site on foot. Several members said they wanted the entrance to be grand and inviting.
- Tim explained that the Seattle Department of Transportation is planning a Fifth Avenue traffic study to determine the feasibility of having on-street parking. He also said that street improvement issues were not within the scope of this Project Advisory Team, since the street improvements are being undertaken by the Seattle Department of Transportation.

7:30 p.m. Miller-Hull Partnership Presentation

- Bob Hull explained that the Miller-Hull Partnership is the second designer to work on the site. The job of setting out the basic pattern of the site went to ARC Architects. This was the starting place for Miller-Hull.
- Miller-Hull took the existing site design and did several things that increased the amount of open space available. They moved the parking lot further north and reduced the number of spaces; they moved the community center further north, creating more room for the park; and they moved the placement of the library north in order to make room for the library's planned 5,000-square foot expansion.
- Miller-Hull is in the middle of a parking study to determine if parking can be shared with the hospital nearby. They looked at parking cars on the back of the site, but determined that it was not feasible due to the steep slope and the expense. In addition, the trees at the back of the lot provide a good buffer between the community center and the apartment buildings to the back of the site.
- Bob explained that the plaza also acts as drop-off for the child-care area, which is at the north end of the site.
- The buildings on the site have been dug in on the north end and perched on the south end. This is because of the slope of the site, which drops 20 feet from the north end to the south end. Miller-Hull believes that because of the slope, the site will have very nice views. The site will need some grading. A lot of the dirt on the site is fill; their intention is to use as much of the existing dirt as possible as they even the grade, but there is the possibility that some fill dirt may need to be imported from another site.

- Mark from Site Workshop explained that as they design the park, they are focusing on making sure the pedestrian circulation is optimal and that it is a safe environment.
- Designers are working on reducing the number of parking stalls and using the plaza for many purposes.

7:50 p.m. Interaction between PAT and Miller-Hull

- The group wants the buildings oriented toward the street with an emphasis on a pedestrian friendly entrance. It should be easily accessible for seniors and those who use walkers or wheelchairs. The PAT would like to see the entrances emphasize connections to the street. They would like the entrance to be a “magnet.” They want the park and community center to be a destination for local workers on lunch and other breaks. The group requested that the south-facing entrance be swung around to become a west-facing entrance. M-H will work on making this change.
- Many members reiterated that they want the park to be safe; they directed landscape architects to develop the park with that in mind.
- One PAT member would like more storage room in a basement area. The existing storage, as designed, is 700 square feet. Could it be done within the existing budget? Storage needs include sports, arts, crafts, activities, every day and annual storage. M-H will look at it, and see what it would cost to do.
- After much discussion, the group agreed generally not to flip-flop the gym and multi-purpose room. They agreed that given the site restrictions, the siting and building placement are optimal.
- The PAT would like the open space to be a place where outdoor concerts, markets and fairs could be held. Also, there was a very strong sentiment for there to be a coffee shop on site. The PAT liked the idea of promoting a site that felt busy, with people coming and going. A coffee shop with outdoor café tables, they felt, would be a great way to achieve this. M-H will look into the feasibility of the idea.
- After some discussion about the orientation of the plaza, PAT members reached a general agreement that, given the site restrictions, the option shown (with grass

between the sidewalk and plaza and perhaps a low retaining/seating wall) was the best one.

- There was some concern among the members that the southeast corner be well-lit, teen-friendly and after-hours cautious.
- Regarding the west-facing windows in the library and community center: some members were concerned about noise from the road interfering with the library operations; others were concerned that the west-facing bank of windows on the community center and library would get quite hot in the summer time.
- M-H indicated that they had to deal with the issue of heat vs. noise at the library. Designers put the windows on the street in order to give the impression of a store front, but realized that summer afternoons could really warm up the building. Designers chose to make the western-facing windows at the library inoperable to reduce noise impacts from 5th Avenue traffic. M-H indicated that they had designed the center to make maximum use of solar shading and warming by adding in trees. Their goal is to make the facility as low maintenance as possible. Their design has deciduous trees, instead of the lower maintenance fir trees, planted outside the windows.
- The PAT felt that the fitness room should be more easily monitored from the reception desk area. Users have been known to steal weights before. There was some discussion about making the fitness room larger and creating spaces within the center that could be opened or subdivided, depending on what the needs were. Some said that a community center needs to be run like a business and that the spaces within the center should be as flexible as possible in order to meet emerging needs.
- The PAT would like to see two meeting rooms on site: one in the library and one in the community center.
- PAT members wanted to know how the site was being designed in order to facilitate movement by the handicapped and elderly. The site is being designed according to the most current ADA requirements. The PAT asked for stairs to be made wider and/or shorter in order to facilitate easier use by the handicapped and the elderly. Also, the wider stairs can be used for seating.
- The PAT wanted to know if, on the west side, we could “trailify” the walkway – make it unpaved, something “softer”, maybe a pervious surface. The PAT asked

if designers could bring the swale up to the surface and use it for educational purposes, focus on permeable surfaces. SW: because the Bon Tire site has a lot of fill dirt already, engineers have advised them not to infiltrate the earth there. But designers indicated that they could look at ways to soften the walkways.

- There was a lot of interest and excitement about creating a stage. The PAT liked the idea of a stage inside the building that could work in a smaller, more intimate venue and one that could also accommodate large numbers of people.

9:20 Final Meeting Wrap-up

- The group decided that they would like to meet again on Monday, Oct. 13, 2003 to meet the 1% For Art artist.

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